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UNCLAS SAN JOSE 000309

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SUBJECT: REPORT ON SAN JOSE ANTI-CORRUPTION
SPEAKER ERIC ROJO

1A. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES: AS PART OF POST'S ONGOING ANTI-CORRUPTION PROGRAM, FROM 11/21-11/22 PAS SAN JOSE SPONSORED THE VISIT OF MR. ERIC ROJO, EXECUTIVE CONSULTANT AT SHAW ENVIRONMENTAL & INFRASTRUCTURE. OVER THE COURSE OF HIS TWO-DAY VISIT, MR. ROJO GAVE TALKS AT SEVERAL CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN GUARANTEEING TRANSPARENCY IN THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS. THE HIGHLIGHT OF MR. ROJO'S VISIT WAS HIS PARTICIPATION IN A LARGE AND WIDELY COVERED EVENT AT THE GENERAL COMPTROLLER'S BUREAU IN WHICH CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE IN COSTA RICA'S TROUBLED PUBLIC PROCUREMENT SYSTEM WERE PRESENTED. THE RECOMMENDATIONS CAME AS THE RESULT OF AN OCTOBER 2005 NATIONAL FORUM, FACILITATED BY MR. ROJO, IN WHICH 80 PARTICIPANTS FROM THE COSTA RICAN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS WORKED TOGETHER TO PRODUCE A SERIES OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE IN THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS.

THE EVENT ALSO FEATURED SUPPORTING SPEECHES BY THE AMBASSADOR, THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL, AN AMCHAM REPRESENTATIVE, AND MR. ROJO. THE EVENT WAS WIDELY COVERED BY THE LOCAL PRESS.

1B. DATE, FISCAL YEAR AND QUARTER: NOVEMBER 21-22, 2005; FIRST QUARTER, FY-2006

1C. JUSTIFICATION AND OBJECTIVE: OVER THE LAST YEAR AND A HALF COSTA RICA HAS BEEN ROCKED BY A SERIES OF HIGH LEVEL CORRUPTION SCANDALS WITH ROOTS IN THE COUNTRY'S TROUBLED PROCUREMENT SYSTEM. IN RESPONSE TO THESE SCANDALS, POST HAS SPONSORED AN ONGOING ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE TO ENCOURAGE GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND EFFICIENCY IN THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS. MR. ROJO HAS BEEN A CENTRAL PART OF THIS INITIATIVE, WITH HIS OCTOBER VISIT PRODUCING A SERIES OF CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE IN PROCUREMENT. MR. ROJO'S PRESENCE FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS, AS WELL AS HIS FOLLOW-UP SEMINARS AND PRESS ACTIVITIES WERE ESSENTIAL IN GIVING THE PROJECT THE HIGH LEVEL OF ATTENTION IT NEEDS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION.

1D. RESULTS/IMPACT: MR. ROJO'S VISIT WAS WELL COVERED BY THE PRESS; HE CONDUCTED EIGHT INTERVIEWS AND SEVERAL ARTICLES ABOUT HIS VISIT APPEARED IN THE PRINT MEDIA.

ADDITIONALLY, BOTH THE PRESIDENT OF THE POWERFUL SUPREME ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL AND THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL TOOK ADVANTAGE OF HIS VISIT TO ANNOUNCE THE ON-GOING COMMITMENT OF THEIR INSTITUTIONS TO THE ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE AND TO IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE; THIS WAS AN ESPECIALLY REMARKABLE POSITION FOR THE COMPTROLLER AS MANY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS DEMAND MAJOR CHANGES IN THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S BUREAU. FURTHER, SEVERAL WEEKS AFTER MR. ROJO'S VISIT, THE SUPREME ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL AGREED TO ACT AS THE HOST INSTITUTION FOR THE PROJECT, AND THE FULBRIGHT ASSOCIATION PLEDGED ITS INVOLVMENT IN THE INITIATIVE.

1E. NON-USG SOURCES OF IN-COUNTRY FUNDING/IN-KIND SUPPORT AND AMOUNT: THE GENERAL COMPTROLLER'S BUREAU, THE SUPREME ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL AND THE FULBRIGHT FOUNDATION PROVIDED LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO THE PROGRAM.

1F. QUALITY OF U.S. SUPPORT AND AGENCY OFFICE: EXCELLENT. POST THANKS JEAN MANES AND MONA ESQUETINI OF IIP FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THIS PROGRAM.

WARM REGARDS,

LANGDALE